

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Official Action dated November 28, 2003. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

Claims 7 and 10 are under consideration in this application. Claims 6, 8 and 11 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 7 and 10 are being amended, as set forth in the above marked-up presentation of the claim amendments, in order to more particularly define and distinctly claim applicants' invention.

Additional Amendments

The claims are being amended to correct formal errors and/or to better disclose or describe the features of the present invention as claimed. All the amendments to the claims are supported by the specification. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7 and 10 would be allowed if they are rewritten in an independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As mentioned, Claims 7 and 10 are being rewritten in an independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims such that they are in condition for allowance.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 6 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,110,710 to Smith et al. (hereinafter "Smith"), claims 8 remains rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Smith.

As mentioned, Claims 6, 8 and 11 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer such that the prior art rejections became moot.

In view of all the above, clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art reference upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely, Applicant respectfully contends that the prior art references cannot anticipate the present invention or render the present invention obvious. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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